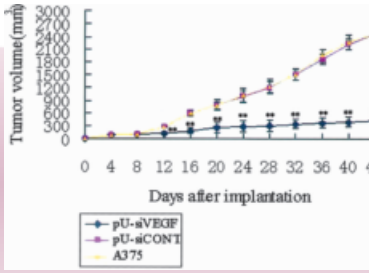
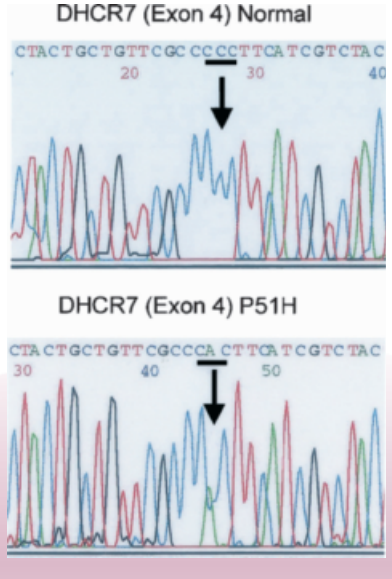
DOI 10.1111/j.1365-2133.2005.06943.

Inhibiting the growth of malignant melanoma by blocking the expression of vascular endothelial growth factor using an RNA interference approach

Recent studies suggest overexpression of VEGF is observed and correlated with tumour angiogenesis, progression and metastasis and poor outcome in solid human tumours, including malignant melanoma. RNA interference technique has become a new and hot research field for gene therapy because it can block the target gene expression efficiently and specifically. Tao *et al* have constructed pU-VEGF-siRNA plasmid and transferred it into malignant melanoma cell line A375. The delivery of siRNA directed against VEGF was shown to not only efficiently and specifically down-regulate the expression of VEGF, inhibit proliferation of A375 and induce apoptosis of A375 cells *in vitro*, but also suppress growth of malignant melanoma *in vivo*. These results suggested that siRNA-based targeting VEGF strategy may build the foundation to the clinical management of malignant melanoma.



Tao J, Tu Y-T, Huang C-Z *et al*. Inhibiting the growth of malignant melanoma by blocking the expression of vascular endothelial growth factor using an RNA interference approach. *Br J Dermatol* 2005; **153**: 715–724.



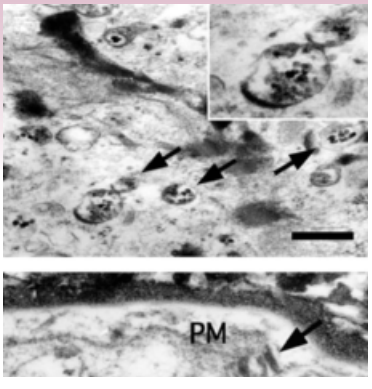
DHCR7 mutations cause photosensitive Smith-Lemli-Opitz syndrome

Smith-Lemli-Opitz syndrome (SLOS) is an autosomal recessive malformation caused b 7-dehydrocholesterol reductase mutations (DHCR7 gene). Photosensitivity is a feature of some, but not all, SLOS patients. Anstey *et al* have investigated if photosensitive patients share specific DHCR7 mutations. Fifteen samples from five SLOS families with severe photosensitivity were screened using PCR and automated sequencing. Five different missense mutations (P51H, T93M, L99P, E448K and R450L) and one splice site mutation (IVS8-1 G>C: splice acceptor site) were found. All except P51H were established DHCR7 mutations. It is concluded that SLOS with severe photosensitivity is not caused by specific mutation in 7-dehydrocholesterol reductase.

Anstey AV, Azurdia AM, Rhodes LE *et al*. Photosensitive Smith-Lemli-Opitz syndrome is not caused by a single gene mutation: analysis of the gene encoding 8-dehydrocholesterol reductase in five U.K. familes. *Br J Dermatol* 2005; **153**: 774–779

Prenatal exclusion of harlequin ichthyosis; potential pitfalls in the timing of the fetal skin biopsy

Harlequin ichthyosis (HI) is a severe and usually fatal congenital skin disorder. The successful prenatal exclusion of HI in two fetuses from two independent families were reported and the technical difficulties and potential pitfalls in the prenatal exclusion of HI at early gestation stages were discussed. It was revealed that ultrastructural findings obtained at around 19 weeks estimated gestational age (EGA) were not always sufficient for the prenatal diagnosis of HI. However, the morphology of lamellar granules gives us useful and important information for HI prenatal diagnosis.



Shimizu A, Akiyama M, Ishiko A *et al*. Prenatal exclusion of harlequin ichthyosis; potential pitfalls in the timing of the fetal skin biopsy *Br J Dermatol* 2005; **153**: 811–814.